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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Third and fourth periodic reports of States parties

Addendum

CHINA*

* For the initial report submitted by the Government of China, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.14; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.33, CEDAW/C/SR.34 and CEDAW/C/SR.36, and Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 45 (A/39/45), paras. 125-180. For the second periodic reports submitted by the Government of China, see CEDAW/C/13/Add.26; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.195 and Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/47/38), paras. 145-218. For the third and fourth periodic reports submitted by the Government of China, see CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4.

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INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 29 September 1980. In accordance with article 18 of the Convention, China submitted its first and second reports in 1984 and 1989, respectively, which were considered by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

In June 1997, China transmitted to the Secretary-General its combined third and fourth periodic reports, which focused on China's implementation of the Convention through the end of 1995.

The present report consists of two parts: addendum 1 (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4/Add.1) and addendum (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4/Add.1) and addendum (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4/Add.2).

Addendum 1 is submitted pursuant to the Secretary-General's note verbale CEDAW/C/SP/98/012 and contains information on the latest developments with regard to China's implementation of the Convention since 1996. All relevant government departments and non-governmental organizations were consulted in the preparation of addendum 1.

On 1 July 1997, the Government of the People's Republic of China resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, and established the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Addendum 2 addresses the implementation of the Convention in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Addendum 2 was prepared by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The addenda are hereby submitted for the Committee's consideration.

PART I

Basic facts and figures about Chinese women

1. In 1997, China had a population of 1,236 billion, 631 million of whom were male and 605 million were female, accounting for 51.07 per cent and 48.93 per cent, respectively. The country's birth rate was 16.57 per 1,000, the death rate was 6.51 per 1,000 and the natural growth rate was 10.06 per 1,000.

2. There are 650 women deputies to the Ninth National People's Congress (NPC) (1998-2002), accounting for 21.81 per cent of the total. Some 131 of them are members of ethnic minorities, making up 30.6 per cent of the total number of national minority deputies. There are 341 women members in the Ninth National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) (1998-2002), or 15.54 per cent of the total. At present China has two women vice-chairpersons of the Standing Committee of the NPC, one woman vice-chairperson in the National Committee of the CPPCC, one woman State Councillor and two women ministers in the State Council.

3. By the end of 1997, the total number of employed persons in China had reached 696 million, 46.6 per cent of whom were women. In urban areas, the increase in the number of female workers exceeded that of the total labour force.

PART II

Supplementary information on article 2

1. In 1996, China began implementing the Third Five-Year Legal Awareness Campaign 1996-2000, hereinafter referred to as Third Five-Year Campaign, based on the First and the Second Five-Year Campaigns. The First Five-Year Campaign (1986-1990) sought to disseminate elementary legal knowledge among Chinese citizens, while the Second (1991-1995) emphasized knowledge of specific laws; the Third combines education about the legal system with practice, aiming at promoting management and administration according to law in all spheres of life. The key points of the Third Five-Year Plan are: popularizing the Constitution and laws and regulations concerning socialist market economy, publicizing laws among women, with emphasis on laws and regulations closely related to the rights and interests of women and children, such as the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women Act of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the Women's Act), the Marriage Act and the Protection of Minors Act, so that women's legal consciousness and their ability to defend their rights and interests with law will be strengthened.

2. Monitoring of law enforcement is an effective measure used by the People's Congresses at all levels to promote the implementation of legislation. Since the promulgation of the Women's Act, inspection teams set up jointly by the National People's Congress and other departments concerned have carried out inspections on three occasions and investigations on eight occasions in 1993, 1995 and 1997 covering 15 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government. They conducted field

studies in townships, villages, neighbourhoods, enterprises, institutions and schools, and collected a wide range of information on the enforcement of the Women's Act and the problems identified. To date, 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government have formulated their own regulations for implementing the Women's Act and have endeavoured to ensure that the protection of women's rights and interests is reflected when drafting local laws and regulations.

Supplementary information on article 5

1. After the programme "Half the Sky" began to be broadcast on China Central Television (CCTV) in 1994, a special women's column appeared in 1997 in the People's Daily, the largest circulation daily newspaper in China. This column offers new perspectives in reporting on Chinese women's status and situation and contributes to the changing of stereotyped gender roles.

2. In 1996, the Capital Women's Journalists' Association set up the Mass Media Monitoring Network of Capital Women Journalists, which seeks to monitor images of women in the mass media, promoting a complete and fully developed portrayal of women and eliminating discrimination and prejudice against women in society. The Network also includes a media-monitoring hotline and two special columns in China Women's News entitled "The Media As We See It" and "Media Watch".

3. In order to standardize and systematize the implementation of the "Five Good Civilized Family" campaign throughout the country (an undertaking mentioned in China's previous reports), a total of 18 government departments and non-governmental organizations jointly formed a coordinating team for the campaign in 1996 to further promote gender equality and encourage husbands and wives to share responsibility for housework and child-rearing. By the latter half of 1997, 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government had established coordinating bodies that had conducted all kinds of activities. The campaign has been regularly featured in the mass media, such as CCTV and the Central People's Broadcasting Station. Some 70 special columns and 40 kinds of programmes on family issues have been included in the local mass media, and over 30 kinds of publications on family moral education have been issued.

Supplementary information on article 6

China's Code of Criminal Procedural and Penal Code were amended in 1996 and 1997. A series of new provisions concerning the protection of the rights and interests of women and children were added. Important amendments were made with regard to punishment for the abduction of and trafficking in women and children and forcing women to engage in prostitution. Penalties for these crimes are heavier, and provisions on administrative and economic penalties were added. Some examples follow:

1. The newly amended Criminal Code stipulates that any acts of abduction, buying, trafficking, fetching, sending or transferring of women and children shall constitute the crime of abduction of and trafficking in women and children, and shall be punishable, according to the circumstances by fixed-term

imprisonment, life imprisonment or even death. Such acts shall also entail a fine or confiscation of property. Anyone who kidnaps women or children by force, threat or with the use of anaesthesia shall receive heavier punishment and shall be severely dealt with.

2. The newly amended Criminal Code stipulates that buying abducted or kidnapped women and children also constitutes a crime, and the buyer shall be sentenced to public surveillance, criminal detention or fixed-term imprisonment of no more than three years. Anyone who has sexual intercourse with a bought woman against her will or buys and has sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of 14 shall be deemed to have committed the crime of rape. Anyone who takes away or restricts the personal freedom of bought women and children or subjects them to injury, insult or cruel treatment shall receive combined punishment for several offences in accordance with the provisions of the law.

3. The newly amended Criminal Code stipulates that no individual or organization shall obstruct the rescuing of abducted or kidnapped women and children. The leader of a gang that obstructs officials of State organs from rescuing bought women and children shall be sentenced to criminal detention or fixed-term imprisonment of no more than five years.

4. The newly amended Criminal Code explicitly stipulates that people's governments at all levels have the responsibility to rescue abducted and kidnapped women and children. Any official of State organs who obstructs the rescue by taking advantage of his function and power shall be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment of not less than two but no more than seven years.

Supplementary information on article 10

In 1997 the enrolment rate for school-age children in elementary education reached 98.9 per cent, with the rate for boys reaching 99.02 per cent and that for girls 98.81 per cent. The gender gap in this regard was reduced to 0.21 per cent in 1991 as compared with 4.6 per cent in 1985. The proportion of female pupils and students in primary, secondary, higher and post-graduate education reached 47.63 per cent, 45.46 per cent, 37.32 per cent and 30.35 per cent, respectively. Among them, college and post-graduate female students amounted to 1.24 million in 1997. There were also 25,189,600 children in 182,485 kindergartens of various kinds throughout the country during the same year.

Supplementary information on article 14

At present the illiterate population in China numbers 145 million, of whom 37.55 million are young or middle-aged; they live mainly in poverty-stricken rural areas, and 70 per cent of them are women. In order to reach the goal of basically eliminating illiteracy among young and middle-aged persons/women by the end of the century (as stipulated in the Ninth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Long-term Objectives to the Year 2010/Programme for the Development of Chinese Women), Governments at all levels have actively mobilized the whole society to carry out various literacy programmes. In 1996 alone, 113,000 literacy training classes were organized nationwide; as a result, 4.068 million young and middle-aged persons have

learned how to read and write. These activities have won support and cooperation from various departments concerned. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education gave joint citations to the advanced provinces and counties that have done an excellent job in this regard. The All-China Women's Federation (hereinafter referred to as ACWF) launched emulation drives with the themes of "Action for Women's Literacy Programmes" and "Top Women Literacy Scholars" and established a Women's Literacy Prize with the support of the Ministry of Education. With the assistance of the Ministry, the All-China Youth Federation conducted a campaign entitled "Wiping Out Illiteracy and Science-Technology Service Action by Chinese College Volunteers", which called on university students to go to rural and remote mountainous areas during their vacations to disseminate scientific and technical knowledge.

PART III

In 1995, in accordance with the actual situation in China as well as the priorities identified in the Platform for Action, the Chinese Government formulated and promulgated the Programme for the Development of Chinese Women 1995-2000 (hereinafter referred to as the Programme), and made implementation of the Programme the framework for China's follow-up activities to the Fourth World Conference on Women. Over the past two years, Governments at all levels have been making positive efforts to achieve the objectives set forth in the Programme and have made much progress in various fields, as indicated below:

Labour and employment

Along with the restructuring of China's economy and deepening of the reform of State-owned enterprises, problems of unemployment and worker lay-offs have emerged. This is particularly striking in the textile and light industries, where women workers make up the majority. Many women workers are laid off and their re-employment becomes an urgent task. By the end of 1997 there were 5.77 million registered unemployed persons, of whom women numbered 3.04 million, or 52.7 per cent of the total. Among laid-off workers from State-owned enterprises, 2.84 million were women, accounting for 45 per cent.

The Government has taken many effective measures to solve this problem, including:

1. Adoption of preferential policies. To date, over 20 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government have adopted preferential policies to help laid-off women workers become re-employed;

2. Skill training courses, job-orientation, job-introduction and other services. In 1997, the labour departments alone offered various forms of vocational training courses for 2.08 million unemployed and laid-off women workers. More than 70 per cent of these have found new jobs after training. In the same year 3.5 million unemployed and laid-off women workers were re-employed through the introduction of various job centres. In the future, labour and social security departments will offer training courses for 800,000 unemployed

and laid-off women workers every year and help 70 per cent of these women secure new jobs;

3. Development of community services, such as domestic services, child-care facilities, preparation of ready-to-eat meals, and creating new employment opportunities for laid-off women workers;

4. Setting up of re-employment centres for workers laid off by State-owned enterprises. These centres assist the laid-off workers with the following: delivering subsistence allowances to laid-off workers, paying their social insurance fees and organizing training classes for them.

While promoting the re-employment of laid-off women workers, China also took measures to strengthen the labour protection afforded to women workers and the supervision in this regard. Specific measures taken include:

1. Establishment of a system of labour contracts between employers and women workers, defining the rights and duties of both sides, thus using the laws to protect the rights and interests of women workers;

2. Enhanced monitoring of labour protection. Complaints brought by women workers should be given full attention, with emphasis given to cases involving violations of the law in monitoring law enforcement. Units and individuals that violate the law shall be punished;

3. Prompt mediation and arbitration of labour disputes between employers and women workers according to law, with efforts made to solve all cases relating to the labour protection of women workers as soon as possible;

4. Helping laid-off women workers change stereotyped ideas about employment and adopt a new attitude towards job selection; fostering a new womanhood of self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-improvement. Employers are also required to be gender-conscious and shall not discriminate against women when recruiting new staff and workers.

Health care

1. Full implementation of the Maternal and Infant Health Care Act of the People's Republic of China. All provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government are requested to enact local procedural regulations. By the end of 1997, 14 of the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government had formulated procedural regulations governing maternal and child health care, or measures to implement maternal and child health care, while 18 of the provinces have developed methods for the administration of premarital health check-ups and enforcement of legislation and the issuing of licences. Baby-friendly hospitals have been established in the country to promote breastfeeding;

2. Further standardization of health-care indicators and benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation, improvement of monitoring and evaluation and timely reviews of the status of implementation of the Programme;

3. Consolidation of new methods of delivery and the elimination of neonatal tetanus. In the 542 high-risk counties where the incidence of neonatal tetanus is higher than 1 per 1,000, women of child-bearing age, especially pregnant women and mothers close to term, are vaccinated with tetanus toxoid. Increased efforts have been made in Hubei and five other provinces to promote sterilized delivery and increase the rate of in-hospital deliveries for rural women;

4. Development of community services and exploration of ways of setting up community service networks. The public health departments have conducted pilot projects involving urban community health-care services in 164 communities in 82 districts of 16 provinces and pilot projects in 105 counties to provide maternal and child health care in rural areas, with a view to exploring ways and means of providing community maternal and child health care services and setting up community services networks for the benefit of masses;

5. Campaign to eliminate iodine-deficiency disorder (IDD). In 1997, the second national sample survey on iodine-deficiency disorder and iodized salt consumption was conducted in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government. Preventive measures, such as universal use of iodized salt and providing iodine oil for pregnant women and other people in need have also been adopted. Since 1996, 5 May has been named National IDD Prevention Day every year;

6. Improvement of water supply, sanitary latrines and environment to ensure that women and children enjoy clean drinking water and a healthy environment. By the end of 1997, 848.43 million people, or 88.9 per cent of the rural population, had benefited from the improvement of drinking water, and 48 per cent of them drank tap water. Some 29.6 per cent of the rural population have sanitary latrines, and 25.4 per cent of the human excrement has been properly treated;

7. Development of cooperative maternal and child health projects in rural areas, especially those stricken by poverty. In cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Ministry of Public Health has launched comprehensive maternal and child health projects in 405 remote, poor and minority-inhabited counties in 28 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government. In cooperation with the World Bank, the Ministry has carried out work in the area of maternal and child health in 295 counties of 9 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government.

Safeguarding the rights and interests of women

The Programme has made it clear that criminal acts of abducting, buying and trafficking in women and children must be curbed and combated. In enforcing the newly amended Criminal Code, governments at all levels have strengthened their efforts in this respect and have effectively curbed criminal acts by combining routine patrols with the rescue of abducted women and children.

1. Special institutions have been established in all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the

central Government to combat trafficking in women and children. Relevant departments of public security, the procuratorate, the judiciary, civil affairs, publicity and education agencies together with mass organizations such as women's federations work in coordination and mobilize all members of society to make their contributions. National or subregional coordinating meetings are held annually, in which participants from various provinces exchange information and experiences and formulate joint programmes to combat such criminal acts and rescue the abducted women.

2. Public security departments have focused on combating criminal acts, with emphasis on big and severe cases. Special actions have been taken in certain areas, so that criminal trafficking in women and children has been brought under effective control.

3. Satisfactory rehabilitation, placement, education and guarding of the rescued women, to ensure that they enjoy equal rights instead of experiencing discrimination.

4. Increased publicity for efforts to combat criminal acts of trafficking in women and children with emphasis on anti-trafficking activities together with rescue and publicity work. Documentary films on popularizing laws and special topics should be made so that more and more people receive legal education, thus enlarging the social effects of efforts to combat criminal acts.

Education

On 6 July 1996, the Ministry of Education issued a special paper entitled "Regulations for further promoting education for girls in poor and ethnic minority areas". It is an important guiding document.

In the past two years, the following measures have been taken to promote girls' education:

1. Efforts have been made to mobilize public opinion and strengthen dissemination activities in order to ensure widespread participation of people from all walks of life with a view to changing the traditional concept of men's superiority over women and the custom of early marriage and early birth in some areas;

2. Girls' equal access to education has been placed on the Government's agenda. Top leaders of the Government are requested to take charge of the work and monitor implementation of laws concerned. Girls' education is also viewed as an important aspect in monitoring the implementation of government policies;

3. Evaluation mechanisms have been established and specific targets have been set. The Ministry of Education stipulates that the enrolment rate of school-age girls shall be taken as the indicator for universalizing compulsory education;

4. Flexible forms of schooling are to be applied in poor areas. Half-day primary schools, agricultural primary schools and girls' primary schools are set up according to actual needs. In order to make schooling more accessible to

girls, certain adjustments have also been made, so that the girl pupils are allowed to bring their little brothers and sisters to school, to go to school late and to leave early. In the school curriculum there are only two courses, language and mathematics, with teaching hours flexibly arranged;

5. Efforts have been made to obtain the support of society as a whole by organizing seminars on girls' education for exchanging and sharing experiences, and utilizing special funds like "Project Hope" and the "Spring Bud Programme" to help girl drop-outs;

6. Measures have been taken to wipe out illiteracy, especially among women;

7. International cooperation and scientific research on girls' education has been strengthened.

Active participation of non-governmental organizations

Many non-governmental organizations in China have taken an active part in support of the Government's implementation of the Platform for Action and the Programme. For instance, ACWF has introduced a series of women's actions, including:

Action to help rural poor women out of poverty. In the past two years, women's federations at all levels have organized all kinds of poverty-alleviation activities, such as organizing literacy and skill training classes; raising funds to start planting and breeding projects which are suitable for women; encouraging mutual help between women of urban and rural areas as well as between women from the relatively developed provinces of the eastern part of the country and women from the relatively poor provinces of the west; conducting a micro-credit scheme among women. To date, 590,000 women have left poverty behind, 23.1 million women have received training in new agricultural technology and skills, and 660,000 better-off women have formed partnerships with poor women to help them;

Action to help laid-off women workers become re-employed. In 1997, ACWF conducted a survey of urban laid-off women workers' expectations of re-employment in 14 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government, collected data and made suggestions to the government departments. Together with the Ministry of Labour, ACWF issued a document on exploring new ways of helping laid-off women workers become re-employed. Women's federations at all levels have actively participated in all kinds of activities with special features to achieve this goal. In 1996 and 1997, with the help of women's federations, 470,000 women found new jobs and 1 million laid-off women workers received training;

Action to conduct literacy programmes for women. In the past few years, ACWF, in active cooperation with the education departments, has helped 15 million women become literate and has organized training courses on applied technologies and skills for 96 million women, 510,000 of whom have become agro-technicians. ACWF has combined literacy programmes with implementation of the "Spring Bud Programme" to help girls complete their schooling and ensure their

rights to education through donations from society. Thus far the Spring Bud Programme has received a total of over 200 million yuan renminbi and has helped 750,000 girl drop-outs go back to school; of these, 150,000 have completed primary or secondary education;

Action to promote women's participation in politics and managerial work. In 1997, ACWF conducted a survey of women cadres in 20 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central Government, and also arranged a broad range of training courses for them to increase their awareness and enhance their ability to participate in politics. A database of capable women was set up to recommend women leaders to the people's congresses and government departments;

Action to build up socialist civilization and establish public morality. ACWF is a founding member of the Coordinating Group for the "Five-Good Civilized Family" Campaign. Women's federations at all levels actively publicize public morality in society as a whole and participate in the recommendation of model families to promote the establishment of civilized, equal and harmonious families.

Now this series of women's actions has been carried out all over the country, with positive results.